

Subj: **RE: Fraser's Indian Head Nickel**
 Date: 3/25/2003 5:58:31 AM Central Standard Time
 From: [REDACTED]
 To: [REDACTED]
 CC: [REDACTED]
 Sent from the Internet ([Details](#))

Eric,

I'd appreciate as much information as you could provide on the Type-II copper piece and particularly the other pieces that were in the holder, etc. I have info (not from the Mint) about the alloy and diameter tests, but it needs to be correlated with other info and the artifacts (coins). If you have a photo of the piece and or packaging, I'd like to examine it and make a copy of the image(s). Naturally, I'd return your original photo(s) right away.

I've been consistently frustrated dealing with ANS. Records from the 1907-1921 period are either missing or "not available." Models and other materials donated by the artists have been lost, and coins obtained by George Kunz are either missing or misattributed. (I have letters from Weinman, Fraser and Paul Manship donating items to ANS that now cannot be located.) I've even had Dr. Doty at the NNC try to help but to no effect. Whenever I have found something of use (which has not been often) I get the runaround on documents; and the photo fees are so high that I have to look elsewhere. For an organization that is supposed to be (or once was...) America's premier numismatic knowledge repository, I've found them to be the most uncooperative of any archive I've dealt with. (Even the Monnias de Paris has been more cooperative!)

Sorry to "rant" on about ANS. I guess I'm one of those who feels archives are there to be used, not to sit in some vault.

In any case, any Buffalo nickel or Lincoln cent info you have would be of great interest to me!

Thanks!
 Roger

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2003 9:08 PM
To: Burdette, Roger
Subject: Fraser's Indian Head Nickel

Roger: Although I have no artist's material on the above I do own the unique 1913 Type II piece in copper composition. It was in the original specially made black leather holder for the five 1913 Liberty Head nickels, etc. (8 pieces in all) and is still there. My piece was a new composition they were testing at the time. Coin World often has no idea where any image comes from because it might be sent in from the outside and CW's readers do not usually care about sources, but CW has a large file of images and might have something you might need. ANS might have an electro or something you might wish because it has much original material from numismatic artists. Keep researching and writing. Eric

Subj: **from Roger Burdette, follow-up**
Date: 6/16/2003 6:32:56 AM Central Standard Time
From: [Accurateye](#)
To: [EricNumis](#)

Eric,
Thanks for the added information. Evidentially it was your holder that I had seen described, and my memory of the description was incomplete.

I will put together some questions, and maybe you could answer them at your leisure.

Roger

Subj: **from Roger Burdette**
Date: 10/17/2003 7:29:25 AM Central Standard Time
From: [Accurateye](#)
To: [EricNumis](#)

Eric,
I hadn't heard from you in a while. Hope everything is going well and the family is fine.

Re: the 1913 Lib nickel - I located the "Oath of office" document for Mr. Brown - 1907 hired as an assistant store clerk. Haven't found anything else about the nickel or about your copper/bronze piece. The archive files are very scattered and it takes a lot of digging to locate small bits of information.

Would it be possible for me to obtain copies of your early correspondence relating to the 1913 group of coins? Also, do you know if Burdette Johnson's records and correspondence still exist?

My books continue to progress. Whitman Publishing is still looking at the 1916-1921 book to decide if they want to publish it and the 2 companion volumes. I have finally "cracked the code" for the 1907 \$10 and \$20 patterns. There will be a lot of scrambling amongst dealers and auction companies to revise their holdings when the 1905-08 book hits the streets.

MIT is still checking their files for the old radio log books and info on the Col. Green's radio station. The Perry antarctic folks have not been able to locate anything, but they are checking the notebooks because a lot of information has never been accessed.

Subj: **from Roger Burdette-2**
Date: 10/17/2003 1:44:39 PM Central Standard Time
From: [Accurateye](#)
To: [EricNumis](#)

Eric,

As a somewhat related reply, I am slowly (as time permits) digging through the US Mint documents for the 1909-14 period. The task is awful: there is no useful organization to the files. This is part of the research on the Buffalo nickel for my 1908-1913 book, but also involves three other themes: 1) metallurgical tests done at the Philadelphia Mint to improve the bronze cent, 2) format experiments for a 3-cent coin, and 3) the tenure of A. Piatt Andrew and his coinage revision plans.

Virtually all of this is unknown to numismatists, but I am beginning to see the "bigger picture" of how these little projects are interrelated.

Your bronze Buffalo nickel was obviously considered a special piece to have been placed in the case with other special pieces. That rules out accidental or inadvertent production. The photos suggest it was made from fresh dies but not as a matte (sandblast) proof. So far as I can yet determine, only Barber and Morgan knew how to do the sandblasting - not even Chief Coiner Robert Clark knew. The Buffalo proofs were made on a medal press with above-normal pressure, but usually got only one blow. Nearly 50% of the raw proofs made were rejected by Clark.

I looked at the 5 1913 Liberty nickels at the ANA convention and have seen some individually in the past. The more I learn of how and by whom work was done in Philadelphia during this era, the deeper is my impression that the nickels were made by people who were not connected with the Engraving or coining departments. I cannot put my finger on it, but the polishing looks "wrong" as if a couple were struck from normal dies, then they were polished and a few more made. Yet....inserting, spacing, and other set-up work necessary to strike a coin on either medal or production presses was more than an untrained clerk could do without help.

As a final "ramble" - in every instance where I have been able to trace a mint-made, sold-for-profit oddity (off metal, stray matte proof, restrike, etc.) of the 1900-1925 era, the evidence points back to engraver George Morgan, not Charles Barber (or later, John Sinnock), and not to anyone in the Coining Dept.

Enough numismatic noise.

Roger

Subj: **Re: from Roger Burdette**
Date: 10/17/2003 4:57:49 PM Central Standard Time
From: [EricNumis](#)
To: [Accurateye](#)

Dear Roger: I will dig out my mail for the acquisition of the Green Estate nickels. Johnson had no such mail.

I just learned that there was a foul up on the date of the visit of Montgomery, Borckhardt and Knight. I thought they said Monday Oct 20 and what was intended was Monday, November 17th. I will try to keep you informed about the matter after I review my files further.

Eric

Subj: **Confidential. Not to be discussed or spread.**
Date: 10/18/2003 4:28:35 PM Central Standard Time
From: [EricNumis](#)
To: [Accurateye](#)

Dear Roger: Your ability to find and obtain copies of US Government documents has led our numismatic foundation to ask you for help in a quiet project we are working on. If it is a burden please say so.

We want to find any communication between one part of the US government and another if there is one concerning the transfer of dies, hubs, punches and other coining machinery from the San Francisco Mint to a Federal Facility in Los Angeles to the U.S.Mint in Philadelphia during or soon after 1906.

When the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire took place in April 1906 the San Francisco Mint was one of the few buildings which was not seriously damaged although the roof was somewhat burned and a wall or so was scorched. Apparently all the other bank buildings were destroyed but some banks salvaged enough money and records to continue to operate, but had no place to do it. The U.S. Mint at San Francisco wanted to give and did give some of these banks a safe place to operate and to have a separate lockable space for each one. The rooms on the first floor had heavy separate walls and could be used for that purpose. There is evidence that one of these rooms had "junk" stored in it and that this junk was shipped to Los Angeles to make room. One of the pieces of junk which turned up somewhere shortly thereafter was a \$50 US Assay Office \$50 gold slug obverse die. It was generally thought that Albert Kuner, the die cutter for many pioneer California gold coin mintages, had

accumulated the tools and machinery of pioneer issuers and stored them at the San Fran Mint after the Feds had a few years experience with the Mint in San Fran and eliminated the need for private coinage. Kuner was thoroughly trusted by everyone and died in 1906 just before the earthquake.

This junk in my opinion was sent by the Los Angeles facility to the Philadelphia Mint because L.A. did not know what to do with it.

In 1907 or 1908 or 1909 William Idler who was close to the Mint or some officer permitted his son-in-law John Haseltine who was in the coin business to turn over some of the junk to Stephen K. Nagy who was the son in law of Haseltine. Nagy made all kinds of coins in various metals from these dies prior to 1910 and seems to have transferred some of the dies and punches to others at a later date. Nagy lived until 1958. There seems to be no possible way for the Philadelphia Mint to have gotten all these dies, etc. except for them to have been sent from California. Nagy could only have gotten the dies, hubs, punches, etc. through his relatives at the Mint. He was an antique dealer in Philadelphia.

The slight information about the junk being sent out of the San Fran Mint to Los Angeles was published in 1912 by Edgar H. Adams.

All I want you to do is to locate the letter or letters concerning the transfer or receipt of the junk as this would not have occurred without some communication.

Please feel free to ask me any questions that come to your mind or guide me to

whatever I can do to help. Otherwise tell me it is too vague, too risky, too dumb, too impossible or too impertinent.

I suggest you do not ask anyone about any details without clearing first thru me and of course please do not disclose the project or any part of it to anyone.

Yours in hope, [] Eric

Subj: **RE: San Francisco Earthquake-2**
Date: 11/14/2003 3:41:08 PM Central Standard Time
From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]

Eric,

The 1910 die & hub destruction was ordered by Director Andrew and was not a routine matter. There are hints of some type of legal action underway at that time, but I don't know enough yet to put my fingers on it. There are also suggestions of Treasury Dept questions about the legality of private ownership of patterns, but again I need to understand more and find better documentation. There are no pioneer or non-US dies/hubs listed on the 1910 destruction list. Barber specifically excluded hubs for the current coins and for foreign coins.

The \$50 half union deal with Woodin supposedly dates from this period, but so far no body had been able to show me the original sources of the stories.

The 1913 order is unusual in that it is much later in the new calendar year than normal. The usual procedure was to destroy all dies with the previous years date on the 1st or 2nd business day of the new year. The only exception I have found between 1900 and 1921 was continuation of the MCMVII-dated \$20 into the first few days of Jan. 1908.

Roger

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, November 14, 2003 4:19 PM
To: Burdette, Roger
Subject: Re: San Francisco Earthquake-2

Dear Roger: In your message of 11/14/03 you pointed out that in 1910 the destruction of all noncurrent dies and hubs was ordered. That was a wonderful excuse or opportunity for any pioneer dies and hubs on hand to be turned over to Haseltine and Nagy because those pieces of equipment were not technically included in the order because they were not U.S. Mint products. Was this destruction order a routine order as the next one was in 1913.

I have written to the Mormon archives asking if they any material relating to the content of the Zerbe letter you furnished. They probably have examples of the uniface and sometimes gilded copper and lead buttons (with thread or shanks) made from the stampings from the Mormon coin dies. My only source of information about the stampings in copper and lead is from Kagin's book (pp. 368-369).

Eric

Subj: **San Francisco Fire**
Date: 11/10/2003 6:55:04 AM Central Standard Time
From: [Accurateye](#)
To: [EricNumis](#)

Eric,
I hope this message finds you well!

I spent a couple of long days Friday and Saturday digging into the Mint archives regarding the events surrounding the SF earthquake and fire on April 18, 1906. I checked all documents sent and received by the Mint Director's office relating to this event beginning on April 15, 1906 through October 1, 1906. I also checked for other documents about transfers of material from SF, and anything including the words "Los Angeles" "San Diego" or "Southern California", but came up completely empty.

The archive files for the Director's office for 1906 appear to be in reasonably good condition. Incoming correspondence is filed more-or-less by order of receipt; outgoing correspondence is by date and class of recipient (the press copy books have separate sections for the Treasurer, Sec of Treasury, etc.) My investigations into the Saint-Gaudens designs suggest that some of the letters sent/received by the Director during this era were done as private documents, and are not in the official files. This might affect 10-15% of documents, but a much greater proportion of the kind of information of interest to us historically.

Several interesting documents were located relating to the earthquake and fire, and subsequent use of the Mint to house the Sub-Treasury, a customs clearing broker and several banks. Among the documents there was one reference to "moving out the numismatic collection" and an unrelated one mentioning Los Angeles. There are two documents related to the Philadelphia Mint wanting to make a cast of the \$50 California slug owned by the "California Pioneer Society", but these date from 1909 or 1910. (The Society said "No.")

Overall, I found nothing mentioning anything else relating to the topic of your foundation's investigation. Frank Leach's longest report is only 8 pages, and most of his comments relate to basic operations and coordination with the sub-treasury staff. Strangely, there does not appear to be any detailed, comprehensive report of the event. I say "strangely" since Leach wrote a report of over 300 pages regarding embezzlement at the Seattle Assay Office. (I am also checking what little remains of his personal papers.) It may be that the damage at the SF Mint and related events did not result in the kind of disruption we (from 100 years later) envision.

As soon as I have time to carefully go through my photocopies, I will make a set for you, highlight any interesting passages, and send them to you.

In other research - I have discovered why the Mint stopped making collector's proofs after 1916. Also, I know what happened to all of the Saint-Gaudens coins transferred to the US Treasurer. Finally, I now have considerable previously unknown information on pattern coins made from 1896 to 1910.

Sorry that I was not able to locate much of use to your project.

Roger

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

Mr. Roger W. Burdette
117 Chimney Ridge Place
Potomac Falls, VA 20165

January 6, 2004

Dear Roger:

I have read the written comments by you and others as to why MacNeil's cover up on the U.S. Quarter took place and I wish to add to that lore.

I have been searching for over 15 years for what I believe is the funniest, existing, numismatic pornographic typographical error. I have just found an original of the publication and enclose a photocopy. It is the fall 1980 Mail Bid Sale of Steve Ivy Rare Coins and item 169 is a 1917 U.S. Quarter Dollar. This error was called to my attention by a cousin long ago but I determined to find the original for my library. I dare you to publish it in your opus as your work would be incomplete without it. Steve Ivy knows about it and said he would not be concerned if it were published. It is true anyhow.

In thinking about 2003 the relationship between the two of us has been a delight and a cultural stimulant. May it continue.

A very happy 2004 and beyond.

Cordially,

Eric P. Newman

Saturday, February 02, 2002 America Online: EricNumis

Subj: **from Roger Burdette**
 Date: 07/09/2005 2:48:19 P.M. Central Standard Time
 From: [Accurateye](#)
 To: [EricNumis](#)

Eric,

I haven't heard from you in a while. I hope that all is well and your research continues to solve many numismatic mysteries.

I am planning to have my book on the 1916-1921 US coin designs printed in August (the one for which you kindly loaned me MacNeil's drawings) and plan to run some small ads in Coin World. Their advertising department requests commercial references even though I am prepaying for the ads. However, since I do not buy or sell coins as a trade they will accept personal references. I was wondering if I could submit your name as a personal reference? It would not be publicized and is only for the purpose of Coin World accepting my book ads.

Please advise, since I will not submit your name without your approval.

Thanks!
 Roger Burdette

Dear Roger:
 I have just returned from Alaska and therefore could not give you a prompt response. I am delighted that your book is ready for publication. Tell Coin World that I approve your advertisement or publicity blurbs on your writings.
 I am delayed to be back at research because my luggage got lost for three days because the plane would have been overweight with it. My letters and Email will take an age to answer. I hope you are thriving. My best Eric

Subj: **Re: from Roger Burdette**
 Date: 07/21/2005 12:23:21 P.M. Central Standard Time
 From: [EricNumis](#)
 To: [Accurateye](#)

Saturday, February 02, 2002 America Online: EricNumis

Subj: **Re: New Research Publication**
Date: 5/22/2011 3:22:41 P.M. Central Daylight Time
From: P1010422
To:

Dear Roger:

I am delighted with your idea of the development of a Rittenhouse Society numismatic research publication and will hope to participate. I and perhaps several others will be glad to contribute any proceeds from any such published writings to any Rittenhouse Society expenditures or activities..I personally have other writing priorities at this time so cannot review submittals at first and it is not because of age.

My kindest regards to you. Eric

In a message dated 5/21/2011 6:25:49 P.M. Central Daylight Time, accurateye@aol.com writes:

Dear fellow Rittenhouse Society members:

We all know how important good numismatic research is to the hobby and business aspects of coin collecting. We also recognize that original research is not much good if it can't be brought to the attention of collectors and numismatists.

To that end, I am proposing a new publication called the "Journal of Numismatic Research" ("JNR) which will focus on original research in American numismatics. In effect, JNR will be an updated series of digital-format monographs with each issue dedicated to articles with related subjects. Article length and complexity are immaterial – what counts are originality, solid research citations, and logical conclusions.

With this email, I am soliciting the research work of the hobby's "best and brightest" – Rittenhouse Society members.

Please reply if you are interested in participating. Authors will share in sales proceeds.

Yours truly,
Roger W. Burdette